

# The Italian Elections.

About all that can be said as of the moment about the Italian elections which ended yesterday is that the de Gasperi Government, if it scores a victory at all will have only a paper-thin majority in the Senate and will thus have an uncertain future.

As of the time I left my office, the Premier's middle-of-the-road coalition was holding a slim <sup>50.1 percent</sup> lead against the combined opposition in the voting for the Italian Senate. Counting of the vote for the more important Chamber of Deputies will follow, but is expected to ~~will~~ carry out the same pattern. The returns are ~~only fragmentary~~ <sup>still incomplete, but at</sup> fragmentary, however, and it ~~will~~ would be foolhardy to see in them any cause for real optimism.

Nearly 28,500,000 Italians, a record-breaking participation of about <sup>although only some 26,000,000 figures in the Senate count</sup> 94 per cent of those eligible, cast their ballots. At latest report, <sup>21,389,050</sup> ballots had been counted, <sup>or about four fifths</sup> De Gasperi's pro-United States bloc had ~~or~~ <sup>per cent</sup>, the opposition ~~, or~~ <sup>per cent</sup>, made up of ~~votes for the Communists,~~ <sup>for the</sup> leftwing Nenni Socialists, ~~and~~ <sup>for the Neo-Fascists and</sup> for the Monarchists, to cite the most important groups.

If the present trend is maintained, the probable parliamentary outcome will be:

1. An easy working majority for De Gasperi in the Chamber of Deputies, under Italy's unusual electoral law which gives a large bonus to any party which wins even a minute majority. Thus with as little as 50.01 per cent of the vote he would obtain 64.5 per cent of the seats.
2. A virtual stalemate in the Senate, where there is a modified proportional representation system which closely ~~will~~ reflects the popular vote.

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The fact of the matter is that as of the present, the Communists and leftwing Nenni Socialists are holding their own, and possibly somewhat improving over the 35 per cent which they polled in the 1951-52 local elections. Their vote in the last national elections in 1948 had been 31 per cent.

The Monarchists and Neo-Fascists are definitely showing more strength, and it is this growth in support, all of it at the expense of the center coalition, which has eaten away at De Gasperi's slim hold. The rightist vote in 1951-52 was 12 per cent, as against only five in 1948.

*There have been protests in Rome that the Italian Ministry is holding back on the election returns.*

De Gasperi needs firm control over both houses if he is to govern effectively. His prospects of making a deal to give him control over the Senate in effect narrow down to:

1. Alliance with the Monarchists on the right, which is favored by certain elements in his own Christian Democratic Party. This would alienate many of his present supporters, both in the three minor center parties and in his own, and might in the end cost him more votes than he would gain.

2. Alliance with the Nenni ~~and~~ Socialists. Pietro Nenni, their leader has long been sympathetic to Moscow and has played ball politically with the Communists, but recently he has made De Gasperi several overtures. Such a coalition has the drawback that it would antagonize many rightwing Christian Democrats and ~~may~~ presumably lose the Premier the support of Catholic Action as well.

It should be underlined that both these prospective partners oppose the commitment of the present government to cooperate with NATO and EDC. Alliance with either would thus be impossible without some change in official policy.

De Gasperi himself told an American source shortly before the election that ~~instead~~ rather than accepting either of ~~these~~ these alternatives, he would call a new election. This he would presumably do on the assumption that, with the Chamber of Deputies already firmly in hand, enough of those who voted Monarchist on Sunday and Monday could be enticed back to give him a workable Senate majority as well.

~~The Italian Elections~~

1. If De Gasperi's center coalition scores a victory at all, it will have only a paper thin majority in the Senate.
  - a. Thus its future must be classed as uncertain.
2. As of the time I left my office, the coalition had a 50.1 per cent majority in the Senate vote.
  - a. The vote for the more important Chamber of Deputies, which follows, will probably carry out the same pattern.
3. The returns are still incomplete, but it would be foolhardy to see in them any grounds for optimism.
3. Nearly 28,500,000 Italians voted.
  - a. This represents a record-breaking participations of almost 94 per cent of those eligible.
  - b. Only about 26,000,000 of these qualify for the Senate election.
4. At latest count 21,389,050 ballots, or about four fifths, had been counted.
5. The results show that as of the moment, the Communists and leftwing Nenni Socialists are holding their own, or perhaps slightly bettering their position.
  - a. In the 1951-52 local elections, they polled 35 per cent, as against 31 per cent in the 1948 national elections.

7. The Monarchists and Neo-Fascists are definitely showing increased strength.

a. This strength has been won at the expense of De Gasperi.

b. They polled 12 per cent in 1951-52, and five per cent in 1948. results.

8. There have been protests that the Interior Ministry has been holding back/

9. If the present trend is maintained, the probable parliamentary result

will be:

a. An easy working majority for De Gasperi in the Chamber, thanks to an unusual election law which gives a bonus to any bloc with a majority, and would assure him of 64.5 per cent of the seats.

b. A virtual stalemate in the Senate, whose seating closely reflects the popular vote.

10. De Gasperi needs firm control of the Senate to govern effectively.

a. He has two prospects of making a deal to secure it:

1. Alliance with the Monarchists, as favored by some of his Christian Democrats, which would alienate much of his present support, and might cost him more votes than he would gain.

2. Alliance with the Nenni Socialists. Nenni, who has been playing ball with the Communists, has already made several overtures to De Gasperi. This would lose much rightwing Christian Socialist support, and might antagonize the powerful Catholic Action.

11. It should be underlined that both these prospective partners oppose cooperation with NATO and EDC, to which the present government is committed.

25X1C, [REDACTED] just before the election that rather than make either alliance he would call new elections.

a. He would hope by doing so to wean back from the Monarchists enough support to give him Senate control.